

CLAIMS

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1. A wireless telephone system (100), comprising:
 - (a) one or more wireless handsets (120), each handset (120) comprising a handset transceiver (121, 122); and
 - (b) a base unit (110) comprising:
 - (1) a handset docking station (118) having a wired interface, characterized by the base unit further comprising:
 - (2) means for initializing the handset via the wired interface, when the handset is physically docked in the docking station, by reading from the handset a unique handset security code based on a unique handset serial number permanently stored in the handset and storing the unique handset security code locally to the base unit; and
 - (3) a base transceiver (111, 112) for communicating over a channel with each handset (120) via its handset transceiver only if the base unit determines, upon receipt of the handset security code for said handset from the handset, that the handset has previously been initialized by the base unit.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein:

the means for initializing further comprises means for providing (313) to the handset a unique base unit security code based on a unique base unit serial number; and the base transceiver is for communicating with a given handset only if (331) the handset provides to the base unit the base unit security code and the handset security code.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein:

the base transceiver comprises means for establishing a time-division multiple access (TDMA) link with each handset via the handset transceiver in accordance with a TDMA epoch allocating exclusive audio packet time slots to each handset; the means for initializing further comprises means for providing to the handset an exclusive audio packet slot number corresponding to its audio packet time slot; and

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the base transceiver is for communicating with a given handset only if the handset provides to the base unit the handset security code and the audio packet slot number.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein:

the base unit and handset each comprise means for scrambling digital communications between the base transceiver and the handset in accordance with a scrambler seed (207) unique to the handset that must be known to both the base transceiver and the handset; and

the means for initializing further comprises means for providing to the handset and for storing locally to the base unit the scrambler seed for the handset.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein:

each handset is battery powered by a rechargeable battery; and

the docking station comprises a charging means for recharging the battery of a handset physically docked in the docking station.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein:

the base unit comprises means for determining whether the battery of the handset physically docked in the docking station has a voltage below a threshold level (302), wherein the means for initializing comprises means for waiting until after the battery voltage has been recharged above the threshold level (302) before initializing the handset.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the handset and base unit comprise means for exchanging

initialization messages during the initialization in accordance with a message format (200) comprising a plurality of fields.

8. A method for providing communication between a base unit (110) of a wireless telephone system (100) and one or more wireless handsets (120) of the system, the base unit comprising a base transceiver (111, 112) and a handset docking station (118) having a wired interface, each handset (120) comprising a handset transceiver (121, 122), a method characterized by the steps of:

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- (a) initializing a handset via the wired interface, when the handset is physically docked in the docking station, by reading from the handset a unique handset security code based on a unique handset serial number permanently stored in the handset and storing the unique handset security code locally to the base unit; and
- (b) conducting digital communications, over an RF channel, between the base unit and the handset via the base unit and handset transceivers, respectively, only if the base unit determines, upon receipt of the handset security code for said handset from the handset, that the handset has previously been initialized by the base unit.

A 9. A base unit (110) for communicating with one or more wireless handsets (120), each handset (120) comprising a handset transceiver (121, 122), comprising:

- A (a) a handset docking station (118) having a wired interface, the base unit characterized by further comprising:
- (b) means for initializing the handset via the wired interface, when the handset is physically docked in the docking station, by reading from the handset a unique handset security code based on a unique handset serial number permanently stored in the handset and storing the unique handset security code locally to the base unit; and
- (c) a base transceiver (111, 112) for communicating over a channel with each handset (120) via its handset transceiver only if the base unit determines, upon receipt of the handset security code for said handset from the handset, that the handset has previously been initialized by the base unit.

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